**What is ISO45001:2018?**

**Introduction**

Most, if not all, organisations need a ‘system’ through which to run their affairs. All of us refer to ‘the system’ in our daily dialogue at work, we know what the system is and we would be lost if we did not ‘follow’ the system. The system provides the framework against which work is carried out.

Unfortunately systems tend to be ‘functional’ in purpose – the Sales system, the finance system, the Quality system or, indeed, the Safety system and the problem with these systems is that they come in all shapes in sizes, they grow organically and some are more effective than others. Ineffective systems tend to be costly to run and produce unreliable results.

To counter this possibility and to increase the consistency of ‘systems’ the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) has produced ‘standards’ that provide a benchmark for the design and structure of an effective system – the standard for Occupational Health and Safety is ISO45001:2018

**Annex SL**

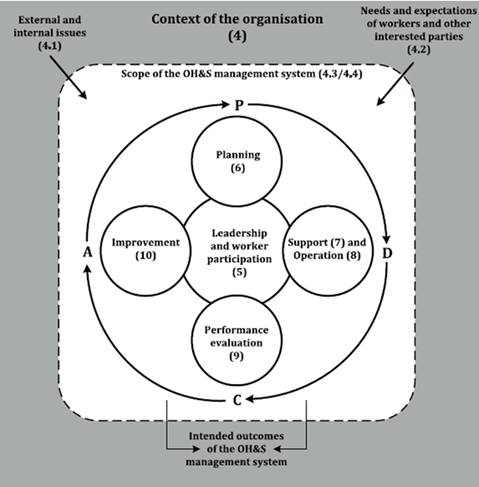
Today all management system standards produced by ISO conform to a common structure defined by a document called Annex SL. This is a high level definition of the overall architecture of a standard and the advantage of this is it means that different standards can be integrated under one system as the broad requirements of the standard are the same.

Implementing a standard increases effectiveness and reduces costs, ‘integration’ reduces costs further by removing duplication.

**What does ISO45001 say?**

All ISO standards have content which is arranged in clauses, there are ten main clauses in the standard of which clauses 4-10 contain the key management system requirements.

The structure of ISO45001:2018 is as follows (clause reference numbers are in brackets):

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**What are the main requirements of ISO45001:2018?**

The purpose of ISO45001 is to provide a management framework for Occupational Safety and Health that will help an organisation reduce accidents rates and the incidence of ill health.

What the key clauses (4 – 10) require is as follows:

**Clause 4: Context of the organization**

The first step in setting up the management system is to understand the environment in which the business is operating, particularly the external and internal factors that can influence OHS. A further part of the contextual analysis is to determine the needs and expectations of stakeholders including employees.

**Clause 5: Leadership and worker participation**

Clause 5 is a critical part of ISO45001 as it is central to the renewed focus on inclusion and engagement. It requires action in four important areas:

* Commitment from leaders to improve OHS in the business
* Setting out a cohesive OHS policy
* Establishing coherent roles and responsibilities to deliver the policy
* Engaging and involving workers in the process.

Note reference to ‘participation’ here, there are requirements for worker participation throughout the standard.

**Clause 6: Planning**

This clause does ‘what is says on the tin’ – it’s all about planning what needs to be done, starting with the identification of hazards and assessment of risks. It’s not just about the negatives however, this clause also requires the organisation to identify ‘opportunities’ something which is new in this standard. The clause also requires the organisation to identify applicable legal (and other) requirements which impact the business and to set OHS objectives.

**Clause 7: Support**

To be effective the organisation needs capability and capacity in areas that underpin implementation. These are primarily concerned with providing enough resources, making sure everyone is competent to carry out their role and making sure that communication on OHS maters is effective.

**Clause 8: Operation**

Once everything is up and running the key question is – can you maintain control? This clause requires the organisation to demonstrate effective elimination of hazards (using the hierarchy of control), manage change, account for OHS when procuring goods and services and be ready for emergencies.

**Clause 9: Performance evaluation**

This clause is about monitoring your performance using both reactive and proactive techniques. The clause contains the requirement to ‘Evaluate Compliance’ which can be a challenge to undertake. Clause 9 also has within it the requirement to operate your own internal audit programme and to undertake regular management review of progression.

**Clause 10: Improvement**

As we know we need to learn from our mistakes, this clause challenges the organisation to establish ways to learn from incidents and nonconformity (through investigation) and to feed this into your continual improvement process.

**What are the benefits of ISO45001:2018?**

The ultimate goal is to reduce accident and ill health at work. This is achieved by organising and focussing what we do so as to reduce the chances of harm and suffering taking place. However the benefits reach far beyond this:

* Reducing accidents and ill health promotes employee confidence and raises morale.
* Employees become more engaged and willing to contribute to improvement.
* Strong leadership increases motivation and motivated teams produce more.
* More effective working reduces inefficiency and removes waste.
* Everybody in the business begins to make a positive contribution.
* Insurers will view the liability favourably if they see that a strong management system.
* A well run system will support ongoing compliance with legal obligations.
* Having a certified system may help your organisation win new business and customers.
* Actions become ‘value adding’ when carried out in line with the requirements of the standard.
* And – don’t forget – very accident costs money!

**Are there any downsides?**

Implementing a management system takes some time and takes commitment. Less successful implementations usually arise because the management of the organisation are not fully committed.

It is usually necessary to set up a steering group of task force to see the detail through.

The benefits of success far outweigh the cost of start-up – especially in the long run.

**What about certification?**

Most organisations will have their system certified once they are happy that the system is fit for purpose. Certification is done through audit by bodies that are accredited in the UK through UKAS (usually). There is a cost to becoming certified and a cost to maintain the certification.

Certification provides proof of compliance to the standard which can be offered immediately (eg to a customer). You don’t have to be certified, you simply set up your management system in alignment with the standard. Proving compliance to a third party is much harder, of course, if your system is not certified.

**How do I get ISO45001:2018 certification?**

Ask Make UK to come along and carry out a benchmark survey of your existing systems. This will tell you where action is needed. Then ask Make UK to help you put the missing parts together. Have your gap analysis done which will let you know that you are ready for blast off and then arrange for your certifying partner to come along and carry out the first set of audits. Certification audits usually take place in two parts – stage 1 and stage 2.